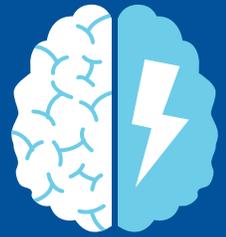


# STROKE CLUB

A publication for stroke survivors and their families

Vol. 8.2024



It's time to Celebrate 40 years!

**Hello All! The Stroke Club meeting will be Tuesday August 20, at 7 p.m., at New Hope United Methodist Church located at 4525 Beaver Ave., Des Moines. The church is handicap accessible.**

This month, we are celebrating 40 years of Stroke Club! We do hope you can join us for some root beer floats, games and trivia. Stroke Club History: In 1984, the wife of a stroke survivor asked Paulette Wood, Speech/Language Pathologist at Iowa Methodist Medical Center, if there was a support group in Des Moines. A support group did not exist, so the Easter Seals was approached. They agreed to provide meeting room space and to print and mail a newsletter for this new venture. Paulette became the sponsor and remained the sponsor for 20 years! She retired from the position in 2004, but others have stepped in to continue her stead.

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Over the years, membership grew and due to the space limitations at the Easter Seals Center, the group moved to its current location at New Hope Methodist Church. This meeting place is totally accessible, with easy entry directly from a well-lighted parking lot. The building is air-conditioned and the restrooms are wheelchair accessible.

In March of 2005, Easter Seals had to withdraw their participation in the Stroke Club due to staffing issues and their inability to continue with the newsletter. The UnityPoint Health - Des Moines Foundation agreed to provide the financial aspect of the Stroke Club and UnityPoint-Des Moines prints the newsletters. Stroke Clubs strives to be a community-based program with much involvement from Mercy One Medical Center, On With Life, the VA and other organizations.

There is so much to look forward to in our future at Stroke Club. I also look forward to the Iowa State Fair in August. Lots of things to see and do. I hope we get to see you soon! As a reminder, if you have something special you would like to see in the newsletter, please don't hesitate to let me know. My phone number is 515-263-5470 and my email address is [bridgette.leiting@unitypoint.org](mailto:bridgette.leiting@unitypoint.org).

Thanks, Bridgette Leiting.

# The year was 1984: The beginning of stroke club

## Just look at some of the movies that were released that year:

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom  
Gremlins  
Karate Kid  
Footloose  
Ghostbusters  
Red Dawn  
Terminator ("I'll be back.")  
Nightmare on Elm Street  
Beverly Hills Cop  
Police Academy  
The NeverEnding Story  
Sixteen Candles  
Romancing the Stone

Talk about generation-defining movies! Ask anyone what their top five 80's movies are, and most of their lists would have at least three or four movies from 1984.

## Not only was this a great year for movies, check out what was sitting on Billboard's music charts:

"When Doves Cry" by Prince  
"Jump" by Van Halen  
"The Heart of Rock & Roll"  
by Huey Lewis & The News  
"Sister Christian" by Night Ranger  
"Purple Rain" by Prince  
"Eyes Without A Face" by Billy Idol  
"Thriller" by Michael Jackson  
"Round And Round" by Ratt

Of course there was a lot of really bad music that year too, but these songs show the music I was listening to (and still do!).

## Some of the historical pop culture events in 1984:

Apple Computer's famous ad "1984" launches the Macintosh computer line  
Hulk Hogan defeats The Iron Sheik to win his first World Wrestling Federation championship  
Michael Jackson's hair catches fire while filming a Pepsi commercial  
The MTV Video Music Awards aired for the first time (Remember Madonna's Like a Virgin? It was sooo risqué at the time.)  
Andy Kaufman dies (or does he?)  
Sony and Philips introduce the first CD players  
Vanessa Williams, the first black Miss America relinquishes her crown, due to some 'artsy' nude photos.  
Wendy's has us all asking "Where's the Beef?"  
The Space Shuttle Discovery makes its maiden voyage  
The Cosby Show, Night Court, Miami Vice, and V debut on prime time television

## Some other prime time shows that we were watching:

Dukes of Hazzard  
Magnum, P.I.  
That's Incredible  
Hill Street Blues  
The Fall Guy  
Cheers  
Family Ties  
Knight Rider  
Silver Spoons  
A-Team  
And Saturday morning TV:  
Transformers  
Fraggle Rock  
Inspector Gadget  
Voltron  
Dragon's Lair  
Snorks  
Superfriends  
Dungeons & Dragons

Of course, while not watching TV, we were busy playing on our Commodore 64's, or playing with our toys.

## The most popular toys that Christmas:

Cabbage Patch Kids  
Trivial Pursuit  
Transformers  
G.I. Joe  
Masters of the Universe

Source: [coolandcollected.com](http://coolandcollected.com)

**Take care of one another.** "This is really the time for community spirit," Becker said. Social isolation is a root cause in many of the heat deaths he sees.

He suggests checking on at-risk neighbors, friends and relatives. Say, "It's going to be really hot. Can I help you out?" Invite them to share time in an air-conditioned space. "Because this is truly a time where that kind of spirit can save people's lives."

Source: *American Heart Association News* June 28, 2022

## 9 ways to protect your heart and brain from the summer heat

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STAY SAFE?

**Know the symptoms.** Signs of heat exhaustion include headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea and cool, moist skin. It can be treated by moving out of the heat or using a damp cloth to cool off. If symptoms don't improve within an hour, seek medical attention.

Heat stroke is more severe. Symptoms include a rapid, strong pulse; body temperature above 103 F; and red, hot, dry skin. "That is actually a medical emergency," Bond said, and people should call 911.

**Drink lots of water.** Hydration helps the heart pump more easily and helps the muscles work more efficiently, Bond said. The exact amount of fluids you need can vary. Bond typically encourages her patients to drink at least 64 ounces a day, unless they have cardiovascular conditions that would limit them.

**But not alcohol.** Avoid it, Bond said. It can dehydrate you.

**Keep cool.** If you don't have air conditioning, or can't get to a place that does, Becker suggests getting a fan and a spray bottle or damp cloth.

"The combination of sitting directly in front of a fan and then either spraying a little water on your body or taking a cold wash rag and putting water on your body and evaporating that water off of your skin will help cool you down," he said. "That is actually one of the things we do to people in the emergency department."

**Monitor medications.** Because of the extra strain on their systems, heart patients need to be diligent about keeping up with prescriptions.

Some situations might require a doctor's help. People with high blood pressure or heart failure might use diuretics to help rid the body of excess fluid. But they also might need to increase their fluid intake to cope with the heat. It's a confusing situation, Becker said. "Because of that, we generally recommend that those people simply avoid heat stress, because it is very difficult to manage that properly."

**Watch what you eat.** If you grew up enjoying summertime staples such as watermelon or cucumbers, go right ahead, Bond said; they're full of water.

But you may want to avoid heavy meals, Becker said. When your body is straining to push blood to the skin, that's not the best time to eat a big meal that's going to demand more blood go to your digestive system.

**Watch the clock - and your clothes.** In the triple-digit desert heat of Phoenix, Bond and other physicians routinely remind people to avoid going outdoors in the early afternoon and encourage people to wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.

**Exercise, but be smart about it.** Even in the heat, exercise is important for long-term health. But if you have the option, move your workout indoors - or take up swimming.

Parents and coaches can encourage youth sports but need to be aware of the risks. "Unfortunately, we do lose young people this time of year," Bond said. The CDC provides heat-related guidance for athletes.

# Be a Heavy Drinker- of WATER!!

## How much water should you drink a day this summer?

More than half of your body is water. It's in your skin, your blood, your organs, and all the other cells in your body. So, how much water should you drink a day to stay adequately hydrated? That depends.

For years, most of the medical science community agreed adults should drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day. Whether you're feeling thirsty or quenched, that was the goal – 64 ounces, or half a gallon. Now, that's changed a bit. Although the benefits of drinking water remain constant, how much you need depends on your individual needs and circumstances.

### How much H2O is enough?

Research published in Science found different people need different amounts of water. To figure out how much water you should drink per day, several factors should be considered, including:

Age (as you age, you can more easily become dehydrated)

Body size and composition (muscle and fat hold different amounts of water)

Humidity levels, air temperature, and other environmental factors (your environment can cause you to sweat and lose water)

Medication you take (some medications may cause you to lose or retain water)

Physical activity level (exercise and manual labor can both affect the amount of water you need)

Pregnancy or breastfeeding status (growing or feeding another person may require extra water)

Sex (men generally need more water than women)

Underlying health conditions (drinking water can help lower blood sugar levels and manage diabetes)

Although your specific water needs vary, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers some general guidelines. Healthy women should drink about 11.5 cups of water per day and healthy men should aim for around 15.5 cups.

That might sound like a lot of water, but fruits and vegetables, and other foods count toward your water intake as well. In fact, the food you eat every day provides about 20% of your recommended daily water consumption. Other drinks – fruit juices, milk, and even caffeinated beverages like coffee – also contain water.

### Why water matters

Water is essential to keeping your body hydrated and functioning at its best. If you don't drink enough water, you risk becoming dehydrated and having your body function poorly. Water helps your body:

Avoid overheating by maintaining a normal body temperature

Digest foods and nourish your organs

Keep the joints, spinal cord, and other parts of your body well lubricated

Maintain healthy, hydrated skin

Manage your body weight, which reduces your risk of obesity and related diseases

Prevent constipation

Reduce your risk for kidney stones

Remove waste through urination, sweating, and bowel movements

Stay mentally sharp and physically coordinated

### Staying hydrated during exercise

Getting enough exercise is an important part of maintaining good health. However, exercising often includes sweating, and the more you sweat, the more water you lose. Remember to drink extra water per day when exercising.

The American Council on Exercise recommends drinking fluids before, during, and after you exercise. Here's a general rule to follow:

Two hours before exercising, drink 17 to 20 ounces of water and weigh yourself.

During your workout, drink 7 to 10 ounces every 10 to 20 minutes.

After working out, weigh yourself again and drink 16 to 24 ounces for every pound lost.

Plain water is the best hydrator. However, post-workout sports drinks can also be effective if your workouts are intense and last 45 minutes to an hour because the sodium they contain may help you rehydrate faster.

### Recognizing when you need more water

Your body is constantly using its water resources. For different reasons, sometimes fluid loss happens faster.

When you're hot, your body releases water through sweat as a way to cool down and prevent overheating. Sweat a lot, and you'll need to drink a lot. Increase the amount of water you drink when you're hot, and if working outside in the sun, take regular breaks and rest in the shade.

Illness can also cause your body to become dehydrated. If you're sweating out a fever or experiencing diarrhea, you'll lose more water than usual. Drink extra water if experiencing fever, diarrhea, or vomiting. Otherwise, you risk getting dehydrated, which could make you feel even worse than you already do.

The symptoms of mild or moderate dehydration include:

- Dark urine
- Dry mouth or skin
- Excessive thirst
- Feeling dizzy or tired
- Headache or cramping muscles
- Reduced ability to urinate or sweat

For mild dehydration, drink water or a sports drink with electrolytes. Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages as they can make you urinate more often, leading to additional water loss.

Severe dehydration is more dangerous and can cause you to feel confused, experience increased heartbeat, and labored breathing. You may also become irritable or listless and, in the worst cases, severe dehydration can cause you to pass out, become delirious, or go into shock. If you experience symptoms of severe dehydration, call 911.

### Can you drink too much water?

Yes, you can drink too much water, which can lead to a condition called hyponatremia. This happens when there's too little sodium in your blood. The body needs a certain amount of sodium to function. Excessive fluid intake, vomiting, and diarrhea can all lead to the condition. Although mild cases often cause no symptoms, severe cases cause symptoms that require immediate medical attention, ranging from nausea and vomiting to seizures and coma.

For most people, getting the right amount of fluids each day is easy, although it's common to forget to stay hydrated. This summer, make a point of drinking plenty of water. Carry a water bottle and keep it filled, serve glasses of water during meals, and choose water over other beverages when dining out.

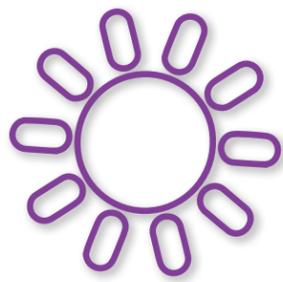
Source: reidhealth.org



## NEED A RIDE TO THE STROKE CLUB MEETING?

Please call 515-241-6435 to arrange a ride. Leave your name, phone number and address in your message. Do not text this number as it only accepts voice messages. Please call this number rather than the person who may be your "usual driver". If you are afraid you will forget to call, do it now! Please call no later than 9 a.m. the day before the meeting and preferably the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. This will allow enough time to schedule a ride for you. You will receive a call before the meeting regarding who will pick you up the night of the meeting. We have several volunteers who are willing to provide you a ride to Stroke Club.

If you would prefer to email your ride request, here is that email address: DM\_StrokeClub@unitypoint.org



# CAREGIVER CORNER

## Summer Time



**Summer is upon us, and more people are getting out and about. But for caregivers, comprising 53 million adults in the U.S., summer can mean longer days of isolation caring for loved ones. 40% of caregivers say they feel emotionally stressed<sup>1</sup>, which may be complicated by physical and financial problems. About 85% of family caregivers do not receive respite care<sup>2</sup>.**

The summer may amplify challenges and changing family dynamics. The child who is caring for parents, for instance, might work longer hours for coworkers on vacation, or have kids at home with sports camps ramping up, sending normal routines into a tailspin.

Just as we all get a little crankier as we get hungrier, heat can also impact our attitudes. Although hotter weather may negatively impact seniors' health, those with poor circulation may favor higher temps at home. Their caregivers, conversely, may feel the heat intensely, as they attend to loved ones' needs.

How can caregivers prioritize their own health, so that they can continue to provide great care for their loved one, and enjoy the summer?

### Recognizing burnout

The first step is recognizing burnout before it is too late.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps you are like many caregivers using common buzzwords, "I have to do this," "He/she cared for me when I had cancer, surgery, or whatever," "Who else is going to do it?" or "It's my responsibility. Till death do us part."

While it is true you may be the primary caregiver, your health is equally important. In fact, dealing with a "major illness or injury" is ranked as one of the top 5 stressors, right next to divorce and moving. Often we, in the home healthcare industry, see the impacts of caring for a

sick loved one as a silent killer. When one is regularly experiencing high levels of stress, healthcare outcomes may suffer.

Caregivers also need to take care of themselves to decrease likelihood of unintentional physical or verbal abuse or neglect resulting from the inability to cope. For instance, a niece who was going to nursing school was also serving as the caregiver for her uncle. Some might think it would be the perfect scenario, but the pressure became too great and she abandoned her uncle, requiring adult protective services to be called in.

Caregivers may not want to bother others. But if they do not get help early on, they may have to address their own physical and emotional health issues later and, inevitably, "trouble" family and loved ones even more than if they sought their help earlier. A major setback, such as the caregiver's own illness or a broken bone, may push those needs from 0 to 60. Consider a husband, age 93, caring for his wife. Neither he nor his wife want to ask their children for help - until he falls and breaks his arm, and the couple's adult children are required to provide around-the-clock care for both.

Many caregivers instinctively put the needs of their loved one first, diminishing their own needs for some level of vacation or respite. With the guilt of taking time away from a loved one, the preparation required to plan and pack, they may insist that they don't want to get away or it's easier to just stay home.

But taking time for yourself is important.

### Signs of caregiver burnout

**Irritability.** Are you more easily flustered, likely to snap at small things? Caregivers who do not feel supported indicate they are more likely to be angry/irritable than those who do feel supported (69% versus 48%).<sup>5</sup> If you notice yourself or another caregiver becoming more easily agitated, look for ways to alleviate some stress.

**A change in appetite, weight or general well-being.** Caregivers often instinctively put themselves second, third or even fourth. They may not get enough sleep (60% of caregivers versus 44% of people nationwide say they lay awake at night);<sup>6</sup> grab meals on the go, or miss them altogether because they don't have time to fix food.

**Worsening medical conditions.** The stress and lack of sleep can make disease progress for caregivers.

**Withdrawing from friends and family.** Caregivers may accept isolation and hopelessness as the new normal. They may become estranged from children as they don't want to "bother" them or may feel resentment toward them.

### Tips for caregivers to recharge

**Reach out to a support system.** This could be your church, a support group, trusted friend. There is nothing like having a chat with someone willing to listen, even one day a week. Research indicates that caregivers who say they have adequate support are less stressed than those who do not.

**Take preventative measures.** Take care of yourself, eat well, stay healthy, go to doctor appointments, be compliant with your doctor's orders, and get good sleep.

**Take advantage of respite care.** This can include adult daycare, assisted living, and home care services. You might consider taking a staycation by checking your loved one into a short stay at an assisted living program for one or a few days, so you can catch up at home or even just get some sleep! At least, have someone come to your house for even an hour or two, weekly.

**Be forgiving of yourself.** Many caregivers have the perception that they are being judged and everything has to be perfect. Everyone's journey is different. It's okay if minor things are out of place or you don't do every element of your routine. Some days it's best to throw perfection out the window.

**Investigate local programs.** Just about every state has an aging council and social workers involved in hospice who can offer access to no-cost resources and programs.

Caregiver Resource Center OC is one example locally, offering respite grants based on each family's personal situation, in addition to free resources. Individuals may qualify for a day respite grant for support.

**Ask a family member for help.** Now that it's summer, ask your teenaged daughter, son, granddaughter or grandson to stay with a loved one as free respite care. Perhaps they could host lunch at a nearby park, beach, or lake.

**Find a little time for you.** Make a list of your favorite things—cooking a special meal, going out to dinner, taking time for a walk—and do them this summer. Carve out a few minutes each day for you. Other ideas include:

Take a soak in the tub after your loved one goes to bed. Use some tropical scented bath suds, immerse yourself in the bubbles, and breathe in the luxurious scents.

**Practice grounding.** In the morning, before your loved one is fully awake and it gets too hot out, walk barefooted on the earth, grass, sand, and/or sidewalk. Grounding is said to reduce anxiety, stress, and inflammation and increase well-being<sup>7</sup> by electrically connecting one to the earth.

Perhaps most important, be forgiving of yourself and focus on the positive whenever possible. Even one positive thought each day can allow your mental mood to shift.

Consider one couple in their early 60s that maintained a positive mindset. They had recently retired and were set to travel the world. Unfortunately, just as they were making plans, he was diagnosed with early onset dementia, which progressed rapidly. Initially, the wife, as caregiver, took on the "this is my new normal" talk that many of us adopt. However, two months into her husband's diagnosis, she decided to get some help. Today, her husband is receiving care services for four hours, two times a week, and she has time to go to Bible study, have a lunch with friends, go to Costco - with the freedom to not have to push a wheelchair and make her husband hold the groceries on his lap. Though these are simple things, it's bliss for her and her husband gets a change of pace.

Consider how you can take time to benefit you. Start small. Grounding, taking a long bubble bath, might sound frivolous, but just try it. If it takes you to Hawaii for just 15 minutes, it is well worth it for you and your loved one.

Source: [caregiver.com](http://caregiver.com)

## Dad Jokes!!



Enjoy this edition of Dad Jokes!!

- What kind of beer does Indiana Jones drink to reinforce his courage? *A Rolling Rock!*
- Also, what's Indy's favorite band? *The Rolling Stones.*
- I asked the clerk where the Terminator action figures were. She said *"Aisle B, back"*
- What's the Queen's favorite Prince song? *"Purple Reign"*
- What was the name of Mr. T's girlfriend? *"April, fools!"*
- Have you heard there's finally going to be a Top Gun 2? *Hopefully, they finally catch those crazy engineers who built a highway that goes directly INTO the danger zone!*

*I hope you got a laugh!*

***"August is the border between summer and autumn: It is the most beautiful month I know"***

***-Tove Jansson***

